

Congress General Council in 1924 took the view that any Committees or Commissions set up by a Labour Government ought to be predominantly Labour in personnel and further, that this Labour personnel should be nominated by it. Since this ordinance was not honoured in the composition of the Balfour Committee, the General Council refused to give evidence, and most, though not all, of the Unions, followed its lead—a fact that made the evidence taken inevitably somewhat one-sided. Further, its Reports were not received until the beginning of 1929, by which time the economic problem of Great Britain was, plainly, entering a far more serious phase than the Committee had recognised.

With the complicated issues that led to the fall of the first Labour Government in the autumn of 1924, after but nine months of office, the President of the Board of Trade had nothing to do. After the 1924 "Red Letter" Election, the Party came back to Westminster in reduced strength, but Seaham was faithful. So far as the House of Commons goes, between 1924 and 1929, his main contribution to the work of the Opposition was in his speeches on the De-Rating Bill of Mr Neville Chamberlain. Here, he was absolutely on his own ground, and when he made his destructive attacks on the abolition of block-grants and the de-rating proposals generally, the House listened, and knew it listened, to the voice of a master. Such occasions however were rare; his own calm verdict was that he had entered

parliament
too late a verdict so definite in his own
mind that, during
this period, he began to lay plans for retiring
not only from
the House of Commons, but from active
politics altogether
In 1925, for instance, he went off the National
Executive
of the Labour Party and took no direct part,
therefore, in
the dark and difficult events of 1926, although
as a miners'
M P he was indirectly involved in the
Miners' Lock-out,
and the General Strike, and he and Mrs
Webb spent a